



A
Vindication
OF THE
Ministers of Boston,
FROM THE
Abuses & Scandals,
lately cast upon them,
IN
Diverse Printed Papers.

By Some of their PEOPLE

Matth. XXV. 40. ——— Ye have
done it unto me.

BOSTON in New-England :
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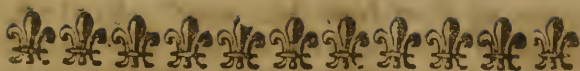
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A Vindication, &c.

§ 1. **T**HE Sacred Oracles, of our Blessed SAVIOUR, ev'ry where charge us, to treat the Ministers of Religion with a becoming Esteem & Veneration. The APOSTLE, *beseeches us to know them, that labour among us, and are over us, in the Lord, and admonish us, and esteem them very highly for their Works sake.* Nor is this inculcated upon us, as a Duty only ; but recommended to us, as our Interest. And the reverse is, a sure Method to bring the Blessed Truths, which they deliver, into Contempt and Ridicule ; and banish all serious Religion out of the World. A finish'd *Stratagem of the Devil!* To this purpose one of our very Reverend DIVINES well expresses himself! “ As a
 “ corrupt, ignorant & vicious Clergy, is one of the
 “ darkest & most comprehensive Infelicities, under
 “ which the Rulers of the darkneſs of this World,
 “ hold it putrifying, yea, the grand cause of all
 “ the Corruption, in which Mankind lye gene-
 “ rally languishing and perishing : And it is not
 “ for nothing, that when the Kingdom of our GOD
 “ comes on, this must be one Introduction or Con-
 “ comitant of it ; Thus says the Lord God, behold
 “ I am against the Shepherds, and I will cause them
 “ to cease from feeding the Flocks, for I will de-

“ *live* my *Flock* from their mouth. So the Re-
 “ verse of this, is, a set of *Good Men* inspired
 “ with an holy *Zeal* to do good, who like *Angels*,
 “ *flying thro’ the midst of Heaven*, Preach nothing
 “ but the *Everlasting Gospel*, with the true *Spirit*
 “ of it unto them *who dwell upon the Earth*: Cer-
 “ tainly such Men are the *Stars* whom *G O D*
 “ *calls by their Names*, they *shine as Lights* in the
 “ *World*, in their benign Influences; the Blessings
 “ of the People that enjoy them are wonderful !
 “ are wonderful !

§ 2. BOSTON may boast of almost an unpa-
 ralel’d Happiness in their MINISTERS; some of
 us, have travel’d to other, and diverse parts of
 the World; and we sincerely profess, we never
 saw the Place that excelled BOSTON in this re-
 spect. GOD has indulged to this People a very
Candid, Learned and Religious set of Men, who
 in all things unbiassedly consult the good of their
 respective Flocks; nor do they intermeddle with
oth’r Men’s Affairs more than what is proper to
 their Function. ’Tis this endears them unto us,
 and makes us rejoyce in them; and offer our
 thanks to GOD for the *Gifts and Graces* that
 shine so visibly in them. And we thought our
Neighbours were all sensible of the *invaluable Bless-
 ings of GOD* to us, in this Regard: But to our
 Astonishment, we see *some* in this Place so *daring-
 ly Irreligious*, as to Libel and Lampoon these holy
Servants of our Blessed JESUS; and others so
 foolishly fond of their *Invectives*, as to counte-
 nance and promote them; and this, among *sober*
Persons, and *Members of our Churches*.

§ 3. OF late, there has been Published, (it may be spoken to our dishonour) several *detracting* and *scandalous Pamphlets*, tending to render the MINISTRY *Vain* and *Ridiculous*. In these, this *Sacred Order of Men* has been *Strangely* represented, and *horribly* animaverted upon. Many things have been charged on them, of which they been intirely *Innocent*, and many things that *it is their Glory they have spoke them*, have been most maliciously perverted and equivocated. And now, who should the Authors of these be, but STRANGERS or ABJECTS, which inhances their *Folly*, and makes their *Impudence* the more brazen and flagitious. Above all, we wonder at a *Weekly Paper*, which has been, and is now, Published, either *designedly*, to affront our Ministers, and render them *Odious* ; or else, it has hitherto, wretchedly deviated from it's *ultimate Intent*, and been notoriously prostituted to that *Hellish Servitude*. We know no *Nation* under the Sun, that has so openly and assiduously insulted the MINISTERS of their GOD ; and been so strenuous, in their Endeavours, to make them despicable and detestable to their *People*, as the *Authors* of this scandalous *Libel*.

§ 4. THAT the World may see this Representation is just, we will recite a few Passages (as a Specimen). from their Writings, passing over the many indirect and scandalous Glances at them. In the Writings of *John Williams* (Tobacconist)
 ‘ The Ministers have generally revolted from the
 ‘ good old way, and have set up a way that their
 ‘ Fathers knew not of, neither entered it into their
 ‘ hearts, to allude unto *J. 1. 5. 23*. They are *revol. c l*
 ‘ and

‘ and gone. Again, *Defective in morals*, — The
 ‘ *causes of Divisions*. — People are afraid the
 ‘ Ministers do affect to Rule over them, in *Tempo-*
 ‘ *rals*, as the Pope of Rome does *Temporally* as well
 ‘ as *Spiritually* rule and determine things —.

In the Learned *Taliacotins*, ‘ The Infatuations in
 ‘ this Country seem always to have proceeded from
 ‘ some of those who call themselves the Sons of
 ‘ *Levi*. They are represented as Men of WICKED
 ‘ DESIRES — and impious, ignorant & brasen-
 ‘ faced. *Proh Fides! Ob Impiety! Ob Brass!* In
 ‘ the *Reflections on the Town Meeting*, Aug. 11. 1721.
 ‘ It is thought by three parts of this Town that its
 ‘ better they were a-foot with a good pair of Shoes
 ‘ on their Feet, and a Staff in their hands. — In-
 ‘ cendiaries of Strife & Division. In the *Courant*,
 ‘ No. 23. *Most of the Ministers are for it*
 ‘ *& that induces me to think, it is from*
 ‘ *the Devil*. No. 25. *The Instruments of mis-*
 ‘ *chief & trouble both in Church & State, from the*
 ‘ *Witchcraft to Inoculation* —. Formerly there
 ‘ were many grave & wise Ministers, but now there
 ‘ are few. & * * *. But ’tis needless and endless to
 quote, the Passages are so notorious and numerous.

§ 5. THESE *Reflections* upon and *Abuses* of this
 Sacred Order of Men, are sufficient, to make the
 most professed *Libertine* blush. Who is there that
 can see all this, the MINISTERS, by whom they
 expect to be brought home to CHRIST, thus auda-
 ciously insulted, thus vilely trampled upon, and
 impiously buffoon’d, by the profane Sons of *Corah*,
 and tamely & silently bear it. ’Tis this amazes,
 & alarms us, and we think it a Duty indispensibly
 incumbent

incumbent upon us, more thoroughly to enquire into the Characters of our MINISTERS, whether they are worthy of these *Barbarous Reflections*, yea or no? We cannot answer the neglect of this; if we should, our *Consciences* would one Day, as a *Flaming Witness* flush our *Guilt* in our Faces. We are their *People*, and hope by their precious *Ministry* to be brought home to G O D, & Everlasting Life; and therefore we are bound to appear in their *Just Vindication*; and rescue our Children, and our Neighbours from the deadly *Poison*, which these *Children* of the Old *Serpent* would infuse into them. And here first, We cannot but admire the Moderation, and consummate Patience of our PASTORS, amidst these outrageous and provoking Abuses & Scandals. They shine with an *Unshaken Constancy*, and still go on to *Minister* in those very parts of their *Office*, that ten Thousand difficulties have conspired to obstruct them in. Their Discharge of their *Publick Ministry* is too well known, to need a Report of ours, and their *Prayers & Sermons* proclaim them, to be *Workmen* that need not be ashamed. Their *Printed Labours* are incontestable Testimonies of their *Abilities*; and speak an *excellent Spirit* breathing in them. Their nine *Lectures* upon *Early Piety*, Preached in so remarkable a Time, that it plainly shew'd, G O D was with them: These (if nothing else) recommend them to the *Love & Esteem* of all good People; and we do not wonder to see the *Devil* so earnest in his *revenges* upon them. Their *Pastoral Visits* are wisely, painfully & faithfully manag'd; and if we enquire into their more *private Conversation*, we find them *shining Instances*, of the most *refined Virtue*

Virtue & Religion. They are always ready to do Good, and Rejoice in all Opportunities for it. Never are they addressed by any in Affliction, but they administer Comfort, and the afflicted find the Bowels of a Father in them; and their Liberalities are also truly extraordinary. We never enjoy their Company, but their Savoury & Entertaining Discourse evidently discovers an Internal Source of Goodness in them; and the Blame centers upon ourselves, if we grow not better & wiser by it. Some of them have great Names in distant Lands; and foreign Countries have a great Veneration for them. But to conclude their Praises, they are more precious than the fine gold; than the golden wedge of Ophir.

§ 6. BUT now, what is there can justify the virulent and unwearied Endeavours of these Wicked Men to make them Odious? The only pretext they have is, That the MINISTERS have intermeddled with Civil Affairs, and gone out of their Line; and the only Instance they can give of this, (for the others are only groundless Surmises, or open Calumnies) is this, When the Small-Pox was first breaking into the Town, and every one foresaw and feared a dreadful Mortality; these good Men were apprised of a safe Method, which they by the ordinary Blessing of GOD, hoped might be an Instrument of saving many Lives. This Method came to them with very authentic Recommendations; nor was ever, any Remedy attended with a more uninterrupted, & remarkable Success than this. This they communicated to the PHYSICIANS; urging them, (not to put it into practice, as the News-Letter declares, but) to meet together, and

and *consult* how far, or whether at all, it might be practis'd; and desiring they would *proceed* with *mutual Assistancess*, each to t'other, as GOD should direct them. And to do some justice by the way to that *eminent Person*, the *Learned Dr. COTTON MATHER*, *Fellow of the Royal Society* (who to his *honour*) was the principal *Instrument*, in promoting this *Method* among us : (and who now disdains to draw his **generous Pen** for his own *Vindication*, against the many foolish **Pamphlets** that are pointed at him; and who changes not his *Temper* for all their inviduous Calumnies;) we will here transcribe the *Words* with which he concludes his *Address* to the **Physicians**; Dated, *June 6. 1721.* " I will only say, (writes the " **DOCTOR**) that inasmuch as the Practice of suffering and preventing the *Small-Pox*, in the way " of **Inoculation** has never yet, (as far as I have " heard) been introduced into our *Nation*; where " there are so many that would give *great Sums*, to " have their Lives insur'd, from the *dangers* of this " dreadful *Distemper*, nor has ever any one in all " *America* ever yet, made the tryal of it (tho' we " have several *Africans* among us, as I now find, " who tryed it in their own *Country*) I cannot but " move it be **WARILY** proceeded in. I durst not " yet engage, that the *Success* of the tryal here " will be the same, as has hitherto been in the " other *Hemisphere*. But I am very confident, no " person would miscarry in it, but what must most " certainly have miscarried upon taking it the " *Common way*. And I would humbly *advise*, that " it be never made, but under the management, " of a *Skilful Physician*, who will wisely pre-

“pare the Body for it before he performs the O-
 “peration. *Gentlemen*, My *request* is, that you
 “would *meet for a Consultation* upon this Occasion,
 “and to *deliberate* upon it, that whoever first be-
 “gins this practise, (*if you approve that it should*
 “*be begun at all*) may have the concurrence of his
 “*worthy Brethren* to fortify him in it — .

Thus the Doctor,

WE appeal to the whole World, whether this
Gentleman went out of his line, or did any thing,
 but what became a *Minister*, a *Christian*, or a *Gentle-*
man, in his address. And this is all the blame,
 they do with any *Colour* charge upon him, & which
 has given *Life* to so many monstrous, and bitter
Invectives against him. But to return from this
 Excursion. The **Physicians** never met, nor
 consulted about this *Method*, according to the *de-*
sires of the MINISTERS, till one of them began
 the Experiment upon his *Family*. He had just
 reason to apprehend them in danger of being In-
 fected the *Common way*: and here, I cannot omit to
 observe the *happy juncture* of *Affairs* that *united*,
 to render this his Attempt *Innocent & B'ameless*.
 The worthy TOWNSMEN had taken the *Guards* off
 the *Infected houses*, and in effect proclaim'd the
Infection so prevalent, that 'twould be in vain, to
 strive to suppress it. By this *act* the *Nurses* were
 commissioned, to air themselves, who had been
 stifled, for a considerable Time, by a close Confinement
 with the *Sick*: *Liberty* was declared to them
 to walk the *Streets*; and now as the *necessities* of
 the *Sick* urged, these *Infected persons* might go to
 our *Doctors* upon any occasion; and any heedless
 or head-strong *Neighbours* run in to visit their con-
 tagious

tagious *Friends* ; which must necessarily render their *Families* very obnoxious to the distemper. This clearly evinces the *eminency* of the *danger* his Family was in ; and in a great measure vindicates his procedure. But notwithstanding, a *mighty Storm* was raised, & a saucy *Libel* published, which among other things demanded an answer to a *Case of Conscience*. Six MINISTERS of BOSTON undertook to give a proper answer to the Demand, wherein they did some justice to the *Gentleman* that *that Paper* had *unjustly* reproached. After this, the MINISTERS were silent for several Months, till at length the constant *Success* of the Experiment encouraged *Some* of them to publish their *Sentiments* on this subject, especially what related to the *case of Conscience*. And here, we think it very strange & ridiculous, to see the *Satyrists* play the *Divine*, and deny that it falls under the Cognizance of our MINISTERS, when so many People pretend CONSCIENCE in the matter. This is to *boast* of their own Divinity, as if they were the only proper *judges* of what is the part of a *Divine*, and to *Counterpoint* their own *Skill* and *Judgment* to that of our famous *Professors*. But we will not ask who go out of their line now ? This is a full History of the *crimes* charged on the *Ministers*, wherein they have gone out of their line : That is to say, When they saw their *People* dying about them, and their dearest *Friends* they had, *Gasping for their Breath*, they did not cast off all *bowels of compassion*, and be content that no further tryal should be made of a *Method*, that they apprehended would deliver them from their danger.

§ 7. WE will not on this occasion enquire, how far our **Practitioners** & late **Libellers** have *gone out of their line*. But this we remark, that if any *Person*, of any Profession, had been apprised of a *safe Method* to preserve his *Neighbour's* Life, in a Time of common danger, and had not *communicated* it to him, he had approved himself to be of a very un-natural, and un-christian *Temper*. And our **MINISTERS** especially, who are *Shining Patterns* of *Charity*, would have appear'd with a *distinguish'd Blackness*, had they neglected this good Office to the *Flocks* intrusted with them. How very unjust and wicked then are the *Obloquies* and *Outrages* which have been for this Cause heaped upon them. The famous Mr. *Thomas Thacher* was not reviled, for *going out of his line*, when he Published a Sheet of Directions, relating to the *Small Pox*, Forty three Years since. And several eminent **MINISTERS** in the *Country*, have practised *Physick*, and several do so at this Day, and we could never hear them revild for *going out of their line* : And possibly, there are among the **MINISTERS** of **BOSTON**, such as the best **Physicians** in the Land, need not be ashamed to *advise* withal.

§ 8. AFTER all, We have often heard that Maxim, *That a Power to do Good not only gives a right, to the doing of it, but makes the doing it a Duty*. And we humbly conceive, if it were more regarded, the *World* would many ways *reap* the *Benefit* of it. And to us it is very evident, that he that sees his *Neighbour* exposed to any great danger, and can relieve him ; not only has a *Right*, but should look on it as his *Duty*, to do so.

§ 9. Now this being all the *Crime*, that is with any *Shadow* of Reason charged upon our **Ministers**, we cannot but look upon it, as the greatest *inhumanity* and blackest *ingratitude* to treat them in such a manner as they have been. We ought rather to value & esteem them; love and thank them, for their Goodness; and bless GOD for making them the *Instruments* of so much Good to us, and to our Families. We are sure the great *Success* of the *Practices*, which they hoped so well of, has caused many among us to wish, that instead of such base Methods, as have been taken to oppose it, a *regular management* of it had been agreed upon; and some are of Opinion, that our **Ministers** may say to their wasted People, what the **Apostle** did upon the *Shipwreck*, *Sirs*, *You should have hearkned unto me, and not have gained this Harm and Loss.*

§ 10. BUT we will not enter into the Controversy, what we observe is, that according to this way of treating the **Ministers**, which is now in *Fashion*, it will come to this; If in a Time of common Distress, they with great Modesty offer their *Opinion* for the *Common good*, they shall be censured, for going out of their line. If on a Day of *Publick Thanksgiving*, they mention *Publick Mercies*, as those of a good Government, &c. or if they rebuke the growing *Sins* of the Times, and put any *notorious Transgressors* in mind of the awful Threatnings, pronounced in the *Holy Writings* against them; it shall be deem'd going out of their line; yea, their **Warning** of the wicked shall be ridiculously called, a **Cursing** of them.

If this *impious* & Satanic Custom prevail, we shall involve our selves into a thousand pernicious *Evils*. Our *Children* will imbibe the *Poison*, and perish like the *Children of Bethel*; and our Elder People will *pine away in their Iniquities*. Our *Reprovers* and *Prophets* being Silenced, *Iniquity* and every *Abomination* will break in among us, and bear down like an irresistible Torrent, all *Virtue*, and *Religion* before it. And what is mostly to be deprecated, all manner of *Spiritual Plagues* will follow this our degeneracy; and the *Town* grow ripe for a *Wrath unto the Uttermost*. We read, *They mocked the Messengers of G O D, and misused his Prophets, until the Wrath of the Lord arose against his People, and there was no Remedy*. In what a deplorable Condition should we be, if *Heaven* should pronounce this direful *fate* upon us; or, if the intolerable *investives* read among us, against our Holy **Ministers**, should provoke G O D to deprive us of these *Invaluable Blessings*, and punish us with a *Clergy*, that should be *Salt without Savour*, and *Clouds without Rain*, as we have seen in other Places.

§ 11. IN the mean time, we commiserate the deplorable *State* of those, who signalize themselves by their *Malice* & *Mischief* against these faithful *Servants* of G O D. We have seen a *Conspicuous blast* from *Heaven* attending such, and G O D has so remarkably revenged the *Iniquity*, that none but such as are given over to a *penal hardness of heart*, can hide their *Fear* and *Trembling*. And when we consider, the *meekness* of our **Ministers** under these *Abuses*, imitating their *Glo-*

rious

rious Master, who remained *as dumb under the Shearers*. We cannot but the more deprecate the fearful condition of these *Revilers*, and earnestly call upon our dear *Freinds* and *Neighbours*, to depart from the *Tents* of these *Wicked Men*, lest they perish with them. And we encourage our selves, that all our *virtuous Neighbours* will unite, to discourage these **Wicked Libels**. But, whether this will be taken well by them, or no, sure we are, it will be acceptable to our **Blessed Saviour**, who is greatly offended at them who wrong His faithful *Servants*, and calls from *Heaven*, *Why persecute ye me?*

§ 12. However, Our Beloved **Pastors**, We beseech you not to be in the least discouraged in your faithful *Services*; We, who hope, to be part of your *Crown* at the *Coming* of our **Lord Jesus Christ**, earnestly intreat you to go on very chearfully & couragiously in the *Service* of your great *Master*. You have many Cordial & Sincere *Freinds* among us, who love and esteem you the more, and Pray & Plead the more with *Heaven* for you, because of these *Cruel Enemies*. And we doubt not, but that Our **Blessed Saviour** (whose you are, and whom you serve) will still honour you to do great *Service* for Him, and rescue your *Opportunities* to do good, from the malicious and wicked *Attempts* of your *Adversaries*; and at length, appear to your *Joy* and their unspeakable *Shame & Confusion*.

To close all, By what we have said, We suppose that we shall be accounted, (by some)

Busy

Busy Inoculators, and would have none to write on that Subject, but such as approve the Practice; but we would not be so misrepresented, but would have every one (if he sees cause) that has Leisure and Capacity to instruct his Neighbours, to improve his Talent, provided he does not stuff his Compositions with scandalous Reflections, such as we have, and every *Christian* and *Gentleman* will declare against. We are of opinion, that Persons may differ in their *Sentiments* about this Practice, without declaring themselves *Open Enemies* to one another, and neglecting *Christian* and *Civil* Conversation; and may notwithstanding, *Unite* in all those things which tend to promote the **Common Good**. We may with more reason be angry, that two Persons do not *Look* alike, than that they do not in all things *Think* just alike. We are of opinion, that in such Cases as these, *Every Person ought to Act according to his own Light*; and we should not *Unchristianly* Censure and Condemn one another for the *Use* or *Neglect* of it, but preserve a due *Esteem* and Veneration for each other, and perform all *Christian* and *Neighbourly* offices notwithstanding; which, that we of this *Place* may do, we shall not be wanting in our hearty Endeavours, and *sincere* Addresses to the Throne of Grace —. To which every *Friend* of the **Publick** will add his **A M E N.**

Boston, January
30th, 1721-2.

